2ST601 – Covenant Theology

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Reformed Theological Seminary, Orlando
Spring 2016

“All the word of God appertains to some covenant; for God speaks nothing to man without the covenant.”

Robert Rollock

Course description

An examination of covenant theology from exegetical, historical, and systematic theological perspectives. (2 hours)

Class meetings

Wednesdays 1:00-2:55 pm, February 3-May 10, 2016.

Required texts


Assignments
1. **Reading report (40% of final grade):** Students are required to read Jones, Muller, and Rhodes, and Vos *in their entirety* plus *500 pages of their choice* out of Witsius. You will turn in a reading report at the end of the semester (via Canvas) which states the percentage of the assigned reading that you have read with reasonable care over the course of the semester.

2. **Research paper (60% of final grade):** Students will write a 15-18 page research paper that articulates a clear thesis related to one of the following topics/questions. The research paper must be uploaded in Canvas by May 13, 2016 at 11:00 am.

   Is the doctrine of the Covenant of Works a biblical doctrine?

   Is the doctrine of the *pactum salutis* a biblical doctrine?

   Are the various postlapsarian covenants (e.g., Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic, New) administrations of one Covenant of Grace?

   In what sense (if any) is the Covenant of Grace “conditional”?

   How should Reformed theology respond to Gentry and Wellum’s, *Kingdom through Covenant*?

   What is the relationship between the moral law and the covenants according to the Westminster Confession of Faith?

   Students may also choose to write a historical theological paper devoted to a major theme in covenant theology as developed in the thought of a major Reformed theologian.

   Other topics/questions may be chosen in consultation with the professor.

3. **Extra credit:** Students who attend all four Kistemaker Academic Lectures on March 1-2, 2016 will receive 4 bonus points on their research paper.

**Schedule of Assignments**

Feb 3

Feb 10      Vos; Rhodes, chaps. 1-2.

Feb 17      Rhodes, chaps. 3-4

Feb 24      Rhodes, chap. 5

Mar 2      Jones
Mar 9          Rhodes, chap. 6
Mar 16         Rhodes, chap. 7
Mar 23         No class—Spring Break
Mar 30         Rhodes, chaps. 8-11
April 6        Muller
April 13       
April 20       
April 27       
May 4          
May 13         Research paper due at 11:00 am

Academic Policies

1. Late assignments: Apart from exceptional circumstances, I will not accept late assignments for credit.

2. Plagiarism: Plagiarism, whether intentional or unintentional, will result in a failing grade for the course.

Office hours

Please email me (sswain@rts.edu) or Ceci Helm (chelm@rts.edu) to make an appointment.

Select bibliography


Thomas F. Torrance, Scottish Theology: from John Knox to John McLeod Campbell (T & T Clark International, 2000).


Rowland Ward, God and Adam: Reformed Theology and the Creation Covenant (New Melbourne Press, 2003).

Paul R. Williamson, Sealed with an Oath: Covenant in God’s Unfolding Purpose (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2007).


Course Objectives Related to MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MDiv* Student Learning Outcomes</th>
<th>Rubric</th>
<th>Mini-Justification</th>
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<td>In order to measure the success of the MDiv curriculum, RTS has defined the following as the intended outcomes of the student learning process. Each course contributes to these overall outcomes. This rubric shows the contribution of this course to the MDiv outcomes. *As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.</td>
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<td>Articulation (oral &amp; written) Broadly understands and articulates knowledge, both oral and written, of essential biblical, theological, historical, and cultural/global information, including details, concepts, and frameworks.</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Research paper</td>
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<td>Scripture Significant knowledge of the original meaning of Scripture. Also, the concepts for and skill to research further into the original meaning of Scripture and to apply Scripture to a variety of modern circumstances. (Includes appropriate use of original languages and hermeneutics; and integrates theological, historical, and cultural/global perspectives.)</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Focus on redemptive historical hermeneutics, unity and diversity of Scripture</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reformed Theology Significant knowledge of Reformed theology and practice, with emphasis on the Westminster Standards.</td>
<td>Strong</td>
<td>Covenant theology is a central, unifying theme in Reformed systematic theology and has played a significant role in the historical development of Reformed theology</td>
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<td>Sanctification Demonstrates a love for the Triune God that aids the student’s sanctification.</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Covenant theology entails an interpersonal dimension that informs the application of biblical teaching for spiritual growth and renewal</td>
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<td>Desire for Worldview Burning desire to conform all of life to the Word of God.</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>A unified understanding of biblical theology is essential to the formation of a Christian worldview</td>
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<td>Winsomely Reformed Embraces a winsomely Reformed ethos. (Includes an appropriate ecumenical spirit with other Christians, especially Evangelicals; a concern to present the Gospel in a God-honoring manner to non-Christians; and a truth-in-love attitude in disagreements.)</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Charitable engagement with alternate views of the Bible and its covenant</td>
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<td>Preach Ability to preach and teach the meaning of Scripture to both heart and mind with clarity and enthusiasm.</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Sound understanding of covenant</td>
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*As the MDiv is the core degree at RTS, the MDiv rubric will be used in this syllabus.
| **Worship** | Knowledgeable of historic and modern Christian-worship forms; and ability to construct and skill to lead a worship service. | Moderate | Covenant theology informs sacramental theology |
| **Shepherd** | Ability to shepherd the local congregation: aiding in spiritual maturity; promoting use of gifts and callings; and encouraging a concern for non-Christians, both in America and worldwide. | Minimal | |
| **Church/World** | Ability to interact within a denominational context, within the broader worldwide church, and with significant public issues. | Moderate | Students within Reformed denominations in particular will require a rich understanding of covenant theology in order to minister effectively within those contexts |